

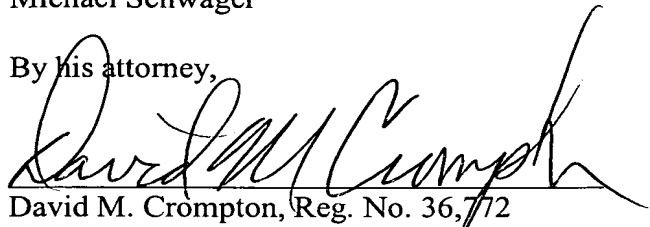
REMARKS

Applicants request that this Preliminary Amendment be made of record and fully considered prior to the first office action on the merits. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 12-23, 25-43 and 45-48 are pending. Any inquiry regarding this matter may be directed to the undersigned representative at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Schwager

By his attorney,



David M. Crompton, Reg. No. 36,772
CROMPTON, SEAGER & TUFTE, LLC
331 Second Avenue South, Suite 895
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401-2246
Telephone: (612) 677-9050
Facsimile: (612) 359-9349

RECEIVED

Date: 3/7/02

Serial No. Unknown

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

In the Specification:

Paragraph beginning at line 2 of page 9 has been amended as follows:

A guiding aid for an instrument to be advanced within a vascular system, particularly the human vascular system, comprising a flexible shapeable shaft [(2)] comprising a first bent section [(4)] having a first curvature (K_1) and at least one further bent section [(6)], wherein said bent sections [(4, 6)] of said shaft [(2)] have the same sign of curvature and are located substantially within the same plane [plain (E)]. Such a guiding aid may be pre-formed by the manufacturer such that the guiding aid may be introduced into vascular branchings both from large lumen and small lumen vessels by a physician manipulating the instrument from its proximal end. [FIG 4]

Paragraph beginning at line 2 of page 1, has been amended as follows:

-- Field of the Invention -- .

Paragraph beginning at line 5 of page 1, has been amended as follows:

-- Background of the Invention -- .

Paragraph beginning at line 17 of page 2, has been amended as follows:

-- Summary of the Invention -- .

Paragraph beginning at line 10 of page 4, has been amended as follows:

-- Brief Description of the Drawings -- .

Paragraph beginning at line 22 of page 4, has been amended as follows:

-- Detailed Description of the Invention -- .

In the Claims:

Claims 16, 17 and 18 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-15 have been amended as follows:

1. (Once Amended) Ag[G]uiding aid for an instrument to be advanced within a vascular system comprising a flexible shapeable shaft [(2) comprising] including a first bent section [(4)] having a first curvature K_1 , [characterized by shaft (2) comprises] and at least one further bent section [(6)], with said bent sections [(4, 6)] of said shaft [(2)] having the same sign of curvature and being located substantially in the same plane [plain (E)].

2. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in] of claim 1, [characterized in that said] wherein the shaft [(2)] comprises a single further or second bent section [(6)] having a second curvature K_2 , which second bent section is located proximal to the first bent section [(4)].

3. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in] of claim 2, [characterized in that] wherein the radius of the first curvature K_1 of said first bent section [(4)] is smaller than the radius of the second curvature K_2 of said second bent section [(6)].

4. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of claims 2 or] of claim 3, [characterized in that said shaft (2) comprises] further comprising a straight intermediate section [(8)] between said first bent section [(4)] and said second bent section [(6)].

5. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that said shaft (2) comprises] of claim 4, further comprising a straight end section [(10)] distal to the first bent section [(4)].

6. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in claims 4 and] of claim 5, [characterized in that] wherein the straight end section [(10)] and the straight intermediate section [(8)] include a first obtuse angle (α_1).

7. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in claim 4 or in claims 4 and 5 or in] of claim 6, [characterized in that] wherein said straight intermediate section [(8)] and] along the axis [(12)] of the [instrument] guiding aid includes a second obtuse angle (α_2).

8. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in] of claim [6 or] 7, [characterized in that] wherein said first obtuse angle (α_1) and[/or] second obtuse angle (α_2) are between 120° and 150° [and preferably are about 135°].

9. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that] of claim 1, wherein said bent sections [(4, 6)] are substantially in the shaped of a circular arc.

10. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that] of claim 1, wherein said shaft [(2)] is tapered toward[s] its distal end [(14)].

11. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that] of claim 1, wherein a helically wound spring [(16, 20)] is located around at least a part of said shaft [(2)].

12. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in] of claim 11, [characterized in that] wherein said helically wound spring [(20)] is provided at its distal end with a rounded terminal element [(18)].

13. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that] of claim 1, wherein said shaft [(2)] is made of a material having superelastic characteristics.

14. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in] of claim 13, [characterized in that] wherein said shaft [(2)] is made of superelastic nitinol.

15. (Once Amended) The g[G]uiding aid [as claimed in anyone of the preceding claims] of claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein radiopaque means [(20)] are provided in the region of said distal end [(14)] of said shaft [(2)].

10079990493